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The Enslavement and Destruction of the Bakuba

By the "Kasai Trust," in which the Belgian Government holds half the Stock, and whose directorate it controls.

Being the Report of
H.M. Consul on the Congo, Capt. The Hon. WILFRED G. THESIGER, D.S.O.,
reprinted from the White Book Africa, No. 1, 1909.

With a Foreword by E. D. MOREL,

Hon. Secretary of the Congo Reform Association.

"The Cabinet of Brussels intends to issue and give effect to the said measures for improving the lot of the Natives **as soon as ever the Annexation of the Congo and the Colonial Law have been voted by Parliament.**"

BELGIAN GOVERNMENT MEMORANDUM TO
BRITISH GOVERNMENT, *July 12th, 1908.*

The Annexation of the Congo and the Colonial Law were voted by the Belgian Parliament on August 20th, 1908.

PRICE ONE PENNY. **(Post Free.)**

APPLY TO
The CONGO REFORM ASSOCIATION, Granville House, Arundel Street, Strand, W.C.

Thesiger, W. G.

THE ENSLAVEMENT AND DESTRUCTION OF THE BAKUBA.

FOREWORD.

"The Cabinet of Brussels intends to issue and give effect to the said measures for improving the lot of the Natives **as soon as ever the Annexation of the Congo and the Colonial Law have been voted by Parliament.**"

Belgian Government Memorandum to British Government, July 12th, 1908.

The Annexation of the Congo and the Colonial Law were voted by the Belgian Parliament on August 20th, 1908.

This pamphlet is published with the object of bringing home to the Public one single fact—that while the Belgian Government promises reforms in its diplomatic correspondence, and defends the Slave-gang[1] in the Chamber, one of the finest of Native races in the whole of Central Africa is being systematically destroyed by the Corporation which calls itself the *Compagnie du Kasai*, half of whose shares are held by the Belgian Government.

Two objections may be made to the opportuneness of this publication. First, that Consul THESIGER'S report has already been published by the Foreign Office. Secondly, that the system he describes in a despatch dated last September refers to the state of affairs as he found it existing a few months before Belgian Annexation took place[2].

My answer to the first objection is that Consul THESIGER'S report covers pages 27 to 39 in a White Book—issued last January—of 50 pages. Now, few people, other than Members of Parliament, take the trouble to read White Books. On the other hand it is impossible for the Newspapers to condense a White Book of 50 pages in such a way as to convey any adequate idea of its contents. The consequence has been, in regard to this report of Consul THESIGER'S, that Public Opinion has failed to realise the tragedy which is going on in the Kasai—a repetition of the tragedies which have taken place in the Mongalla, A.B.I.R., Rubi-Welle, Crown Domain, and many other districts of the Congo in the course of the last fifteen years, with this difference that the sympathy even of those who are not generally interested in the fate of the majority of Native races, may at least be solicited for the races of the Kasai, of which celebrated travellers have sung the praises.

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1 *Vide* the Speech of the Belgian Colonial Minister in the Chamber in April, 1909.
2 Annexation was voted in August last.

My answer to the second objection is a twofold one. In the first place —this: Last December—four months ago M. RENKIN—the Belgian Colonial Minister went out of his way (although cognisant of the nature of Consul THESIGER'S report, through M. EMILE VANDERVELDE, who had met Consul THESIGER in the Congo) to deny, by anticipation, every one of the charges which are to be found in the Consul's report. A more deliberate attempt to discredit in advance the work of a distinguished public servant of the British Crown has not been made in Belgium since KING LEOPOLD went in person on a pilgrimage to the European Courts to discredit in advance the report of Consul CASEMENT (whose nature he had ascertained from various sources) after a vain effort, conducted through one of his British henchmen, to dissuade Lord LANSDOWNE from issuing it.

In the second place—this: The rubber returns of the last few months show that one-half the rubber, which is now being obtained from *the whole of the Congo*, is extracted from the Kasai region. No more conclusive proof could be adduced that the system exposed by Consul THESIGER, and denied in advance by the Belgian Colonial Minister, *is in full swing to-day, eight months after annexation.*

The figures are sufficient without such additional proof as is conveyed—for example—in the following information published in the Belgian Press in the last days of March:—

> "In the middle of January the whole region south of Dilemba was up. The natives attacked upon several occasions, but unsuccessfully, the station commanded by Sub-Lieutenant GIOVANI COARI and his assistant, the Non-Commissioned Officer FELIX. At the Station of Tshicombe there is agitation among the natives. All the chiefs of the district refuse supplies. At Bissaie, on the Lower Kantsha, there are also disturbances."

The figures are given below:—

CONGO RUBBER RETURNS.

Steamer.	Date of Arrival at Antwerp.	Total Rubber.	Kasai Rubber.	Percentage.
"Albertville" ...	December ...	318 ...	92 ...	29 per cent.
"Leopoldville" ...	January ...	195 ...	72 ...	37 „
"Brusselsville" ...	February ...	246 ...	92 ...	37 „
"Albertville" ...	March ...	216 ...	108 ...	50 „
"Leopoldville" ...	April ...	238 ...	135 ...	56 „

Total Rubber in from five last Steamers ... 1,213

Total Rubber from Kasai 499

Per centage of Kasai Rubber to total Rubber from the whole of the Congo ... ... } 41 per cent.

NOTE.—The figures of Rubber Imports given on page 4 are in Tons. The word "Tons" has been left out in the text.

SUMMARISED REPORT.

Consul Thesiger to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received October 5th.)[1]

Sir, *Boma, September 9th*, 1908.

I have the honour to report that I have returned to Boma from my journey into the Kasai district. As it will be impossible for me to complete my report before the departure of the next mail, I shall make a brief summary of my experiences and amplify them in my final despatch on the subject.

With regard to the Kasai Company, I find that in their dealings with the native population they habitually disregard the regulations for the prevention of wilful waste of the rubber resources of the country and cast aside every restriction imposed upon them for the purpose of safeguarding native rights. This systematic violation of the Congo Free State laws cannot be carried on without the knowledge of the Directors of the Company, and would be impossible but for the wilful blindness, if not the actual connivance, of the State officials themselves.

I am in a position to vouch for the truth of the following facts :—

Wholesale destruction of rubber vines.

1. That in all the country through which I passed, where this Company have established posts, their agents have issued orders that the vines are to be cut, and not tapped as in the past, the quantity of rubber procurable from the latter method not being sufficiently large to satisfy the greed of the Company. There are stringent laws against this cutting of the rubber vines, and State forest Inspectors who are supposed to report to the authorities all cases which come under their notice.

The wholesale destruction of the vines now going on unchecked can be imagined when I say that thirty-one villages which I visited in the Bakuba district send in monthly 173,000 balls of rubber weighing on an average from 22 to 28 lbs. per 1,000, and that experiments show that it takes from 20 to 40 feet of vine to make 10 balls.

From reliable evidence I hear that the same system is pursued in other districts which I was unable to visit.

1 Africa, No. 1, 1905.

Villages "taxed" in rubber.

2. That, although the Kasai Company claim that all their rubber is made by voluntary labour, that it is in no way a tax, and that their agents have neither the right nor the power to force the native to bring it in, each village is taxed at so many balls a month, and that any shortage is punished by imprisonment, fines, or chicotte, while the amount fixed is so high that the natives, especially the Bakuba, have no time to cultivate their fields, repair their houses, hunt, or fish.

Armed sentries in the villages.

3. That, although the Company deny the employment of armed sentries, they have in every village or group of villages, one or more capitas who are, with few exceptions, all armed with cap guns. The Free State law prohibits the carrying of cap guns by the capitas, or native agents of Companies, who have to deal with the natives in commercial matters. It may be mentioned that the villagers have to supply gratis to these capitas food, palm wine, a house, and a woman.

Flogging the natives.

4. That while no trader or commercial agent has any right to punish any native by imprisonment or by flogging, the Kasai Company agents not only punish the natives in these and other ways for any shortage in the month's supply of rubber, but allow their native capitas to usurp the same powers in the fullest measure in the villages under their charge. I heard of three cases in which these capitas imprisoned women in order to bring pressure upon the men.

Raids by proxy.

5. That while the Company deny that they make any military raids to enforce the collection of rubber, they do force Lukenga, the King of the Bakubas, to carry out these raids for them with his native soldiers, who, to the number of some 300 or more, are all armed with cap guns. These soldiers can be met with all over the Bakuba territory scouring the country for the purpose of enforcing the rubber tax, making prisoners, and collecting fines for the benefit of the Kasai Company. I shall mention in my final report two instances of these raids.

Laws of humanity disregarded.

Thus by cutting the vines, by imposing taxes for the benefit of the Company, by employing armed sentries, by punishing natives without legal authority, and by causing military raids to be made to force the natives to make rubber, the Kasai Company in five different ways are for the sake of profit deliberately breaking the laws of the State; the laws of humanity are still less regarded.

Natives no time to attend to necessities of life.

In the Bakuba country I found everywhere, except in the villages exempted for some special reason, that the rubber tax was so heavy that the villagers had no time to attend even to the necessities of life, and many of the capitas told me that they had orders not to allow the natives to clear the ground for cultivation, to hunt, or to fish, as

it took up time which should be spent in making rubber. Even so in some cases the natives can only comply with the demands made on them by utilizing the labour of the women and children. In consequence, their huts are falling to ruin, their fields are uncultivated and are being fast overgrown by bush, and the people are short of food.

Race dying off. Accidents are frequent, the Bakuba being a large race and unaccustomed to tree climbing, and everywhere they told us the people are dying off and the numbers decreasing. In this district there is no sleeping sickness or other epidemic to account for the reduction.

Starvation. This district was formerly so rich in corn, millet, and other foodstuffs that the mission station of Luebo used in old days to send there to buy maize for their workmen; now, as regards cultivation, it is almost a desert, and my carriers often had difficulty in procuring sufficient food. The rainy season was approaching, and everywhere the complaint was made that the men were not allowed to utilize the few remaining weeks in clearing new ground for the sowing of next year's crop. This means that in the coming year there will be an increased shortage of food.

Government incompetent or accomplice. With regard to the position of the Government in reference to these abuses, they must either confess their utter incompetency to enforce their own laws so far as these Companies are concerned or confess their complicity in these practices.

A yearly profit of £320,000. I have met several of the younger officials who, I am convinced, would willingly use what power they have to put an end to this state of things, but they are to a large extent powerless in the face of the central authority, which does not overlook the fact that it holds 50 per cent. of the shares in the Kasai Company, which is, thanks to its present methods, making a profit of some 8,000,000 fr. yearly.

Kasai Coy. forfeited every right to existence. Much credit is taken by the State and Company for the abolition of the tax in "croisettes," but this tax has been supplanted by still more unjustifiable methods of extortion, and I have no hesitation in affirming that the Kasai Company, even if judged by Congo Free State law, has justly forfeited every right to the privileges granted them by the Government in December, 1901, and that no method of reform or change of Administration will be of any real benefit to the people of this district unless it includes the entire abolition of this Company, which has so long been held up as a model of what a concessionary Company should be.

I have, &c.,

(*Signed*) WILFRED G. THESIGER.

FULL REPORT.

Consul Thesiger to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received October 26th.)[1]

Sir, *Boma, September 14th*, 1908.

What appears on the surface, and what lies behind.

I have the honour to transmit herewith my full Report on my journey in the Kasai district. Leaving Leopoldville on the 23rd May by the American Mission steamer "Lapsley," I arrived at Dima, the head-quarters of the Kasai Company, on the 27th, and, thanks to the courtesy of the Director, Colonel CHALTIN, was shown all over the station, which is provided with good houses and stores in brick, a slip and workshops for the repairing and putting together of the Company's steamers. The numerous workmen in the establishment seemed to me to be well trained; they are, I have every reason to believe, paid a fair wage, and are decently housed in native fashion. In fact the station, so far as I could see, is a model one, and I have nothing but praise for the other Kasai posts which I visited on the river banks. The point is an important one, as the Kasai Company invariably reply to any criticisms or attacks made upon them in regard to their treatment of the native races by pointing to the happy conditions under which the workmen and labourers live at these posts. As the same line of argument is followed also by the State, it may be as well to dwell upon it a little longer, the more so as to my mind it clearly explains the divergency of the reports circulated by those who actually live in the country and penetrate into the interior and by those who pass through the country as travellers down the main rivers or along the main routes under State guidance. I acknowledge fully that in the State and Company posts which I visited there is little that one can criticize, much that one can praise. The grounds are usually well laid out, the houses well built, and the native soldiers and workmen appear well housed and well nourished. It must, however, always be remembered that the natives at these stations are a privileged class, regularly paid and fed in the case of State posts, *by a tax in food-stuffs imposed on the surrounding country*, the State officials having to a large extent learnt from bitter experience that their safety depends on the contentedness of the native soldier, and that their own comfort largely depends on the comfort of their workmen, who, unless fairly paid and treated, will continually be running away, thus adding to the difficulties of local administration. Although from the evidence of State officials it has been proved that individual cases of abuses are not infrequent even at these posts, the chance traveller will certainly see nothing of them, and when he judges of the condition of the country by what he actually sees at these stations, his opinions may be perfectly honest, but they are absolutely worthless.

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1 The Italics are mine. E.D.M.

It is as though some well-meaning person, who had heard that a certain fashionable firm was making a fortune by sweated labour, were to venture to deny the facts because a cursory visit to the West End establishment showed that the salesmen behind the counter were well dressed and well nourished, ignoring altogether the festering misery of the sweaters' dens in which every article sold over that counter was made up.

The lot of the rubber gatherer.

This is literally the case with the Kasai Company. In order that their administration may run smoothly, that their building operations may not be hampered by delays, that their white agents may be kept supplied with the necessities of life and trade, and that their steamers may be able to run regularly and bring down at stated intervals their consignments of rubber, the Company is bound to treat their workmen decently, as it is only by doing so that they can get decent work out of them. It is already something gained that a Congo Company should have learned, or be learning, this lesson, *but it must not for a moment be supposed that it is also applied to the natives inland, who merely gather the rubber, and are the source of the enormous profits which the Company is extracting from the country.* Experience has taught them in the first case that self-interest is best served by milder methods; in the second, Congo Free State history has proved to them that rubber can be gathered more cheaply and in larger quantities by violence and injustice. The Kasai Company has profited by both lessons.

From what I saw and heard during this tour, which comprised a visit to the districts around Ibanj, inhabited by the Bakuba and the Bakette, a considerable part of the country on both banks of the river between Luebo and Luluabourg, and the region between the latter place and Lusambo, I am convinced that the methods employed by the Kasai Company agents are not only unjustifiable but also, even by the Congo Free State law, illegal. I will take the various points one by one:—

1. It is forbidden by State law to collect rubber except by means of incisions in the bark, and it is a punishable offence to cut the vines for the purpose of making what is known as "pounded" rubber, and even the buyers of rubber so made can be punished. The reason is obvious, as pounded rubber is obtained by cutting down the vines, which are then cut up into short lengths and beaten with heavy wooden mallets on a wooden anvil until the bark is detachable. The stick itself is then thrown away and the mass of the bark pounded until the fibres all drop away in fine red dust, and a thin circular cake of rubber is obtained. This is beaten for some time longer in order to extract as far as possible the various impurities which it may contain, and is then cut up into long thin strips in order that it may be twisted into balls of a certain size, in which shape it is ultimately handed over to the Company's agent.

Destruction of natural resources with the knowledge of the Authorities.

The destruction entailed by this method of collecting is enormous, as it may take anything between 15 or 20 feet of mature vine of average thickness up to 40 feet of thin immature vine to make ten of these balls, the market price of which is 100 cowries, $3\frac{1}{2}d.$ at the outside. In spite of the preceding facts, I found in all the districts I visited that rubber is now collected in no other way than by cutting the vines. That it is done with the full knowledge of the Company's agents and of the State officials in the districts is incontestable, since the process is carried on not in the depths of the forest, but openly at their homes. As one passes through the country one sees in every village men, and often women and children, occupied in pounding the bark, and, even where this is not the case, the heaps of red dust, the stripped vine sticks, and the smooth logs on which the rubber is beaten, which can be seen in front of most houses, are ample evidence to prove the truth, and are too evident to be ignored. The Company agents, State officials, and a forest inspector, specially appointed for the prevention of the destruction of the forest wealth, frequently travel through these districts, and yet one is asked to believe that both State and Company are ignorant of the fact that the rubber by which they make such enormous profits is obtained by a forbidden process.

I also gathered from local information that the legal method of making incisions in the vines was formerly practised, and this information was verified by the present Vice Governor-General, who, in the course of a conversation on the subject told me that, when he was in the Kasai two years ago, he had seen the incisions and knew that the rubber was collected in a legal way, but that it was impossible to prevent individual natives from breaking the law, since it was impossible to station a gendarme behind each collector. I was glad to hear it, as it confirmed exactly what the natives had told me when asked if they had always made rubber in the present way. The invariable answer was that they used to tap the vines, but that when the white man insisted upon their bringing in larger quantities, and they told him that they could not make the vine produce its sap more quickly or more abundantly, they were ordered to cut them, as the rubber must be brought in.

That is the native story which was repeated to me in every village, where I put this question. It seems to me to be amply confirmed by circumstantial evidence, and certainly nearly all the vine sticks which I saw brought in for pounding bore the scars of old incisions. The system of tapping also, though slower, is much easier work than the incessant pounding with a heavy mallet, and the native, unless forced, does not as a rule choose the most laborious methods when the choice is open to him.

Destruction the result of "additional pressure."

In the Bakuba and Bakette villages the testimony was unanimous that it was about twelve or fourteen moons ago that additional pressure was put upon them to bring in more rubber, and that they got orders to cut the vines. In the Lulua villages it appears to have been still longer since they began to practise this method in a wholesale fashion.

That the Kasai Company collect all their rubber in the districts I visited by this illegal process is a fact. I myself saw the natives in well over fifty villages engaged in this way. I have the evidence of these villagers that they have long since given up making rubber by means of incisions, and all the capitas employed by the Company whom I questioned told me the same thing. Yet the State Authorities and the Directors of the Kasai Company would have one believe that they are ignorant of the fact, and innocent of any complicity in this wholesale violation of their laws and regulations. Some quote the severity of the laws on this point as proof that the abuse cannot exist; others explain how impossible it is to stop it, since in two cases tried before the Law Courts, even the experts were unable to distinguish between specimens of pounded rubber and of rubber gathered by means of incisions. Consequently the destruction of the rubber vines proceeds unchecked.

How the Company interprets the "law of supply and demand."

2. The question of the voluntary nature of the work done by the native rubber collectors is one of the most interesting points in connection with the Kasai Company's administration. Nominally the native in the Kasai is free to make rubber if he chooses, free to sell it to whom he will. This is acknowledged both by the State and the Company, the former saying that they do not, and the latter that they have not the power, to tax the natives in this district. I have in my possession copies of letters from Dr. Dreypondt, ex-Director of the Company in Africa, and from Colonel Chaltin, the present holder of the post, in which both of these gentlemen declare that the Kasai Company works on one principle only—the law of supply and demand. Their interpretation of this law is, to say the least, a peculiar one.

So many balls of rubber a month or. . . . . .

The country is divided into sections, each in charge of a white agent, who, in turn, places a native capita in every village or group of villages in his section. The chief of each village is told that his village must bring in so many balls of rubber per month, the amount varying according to the number of the inhabitants. Any failure to bring in the required amount is severely punished. The method of payment and of apportioning out the total amount required among the villagers is as follows: At the beginning of each month the capitas in the various villages receive a certain quantity of trade goods, the value of which in cowries is supposed to equal the value of the quantity of rubber at which the village is taxed, reckoned at ten balls

for 100 cowries. These goods he proceeds to distribute, giving a piece of cloth to one man, a hat or an iron hoe head to another, and so on. Each recipient is then at the end of month responsible for so many balls of rubber. No choice of the objects is given, no refusal of them is allowed. If any one makes any objection the stuff is thrown down at his door, and whether it is taken or left the man is responsible for so many balls at the end of the month. The total amounts are fixed by the agents at the maximum which the inhabitants are capable of producing. Since all labour is voluntary they have not even to make pretended calculations based on forty hours' labour a month. At Kosh the capita told me he had ten villages in his charge, bringing in 32,400 balls a month; one of them, which contained only two grown men, supplying 200 balls monthly. For facilitating the counting of the amounts the balls are tied up in bales of 1,000 each. I weighed very many of these bales, and found the average weight was from 11 to 14 kilog. per 1,000 balls. The thirty-one villages which I visited in the Bakuba and Bakette district brought in monthly some 173,000 balls. Some of the larger villages are taxed at 15,000 and 20,000 balls.

Work compulsory and incessant.

As I have already said, all this is "pounded" rubber, and it is not surprising that the villagers complained that every month makes the rubber harder to get, and in many places they even dig up the roots of the cut vines in order to beat them into rubber. The work is compulsory; it is also incessant. The vines have to be sought out in the forest, cut down and disentangled from the high-growing branches, divided into lengths, and carried home. This operation has to be continually repeated, as no man can carry a larger quantity of the heavy vine lengths than will keep him occupied for two or three days. Accidents are frequent, especially among the Bakuba, who are large-built men, hunters and agriculturists by nature, and unaccustomed to tree climbing. Large as the Bakuba villages still are, the population is diminishing. Here there is no sleeping sickness to account for the decrease, there have been no epidemics of late years; exposure, overwork, and shortage of proper food alone are responsible for it. The Bakuba district was formerly one of the richest food-producing regions in the country, maize and millet being the staple crops, together with manioc and other plants. So much so was this the case that the mission at Luebo used to send there to buy maize. Under the present régime the villagers are not allowed to waste in cultivating, hunting or fishing — time which should be occupied in making rubber.

No time to grow food-stuffs.

In nearly all the villages I examined the lofts, which at that season of the year should have been full of corn: 50 per cent. were empty; in the others there was a small quantity of the maize cobs still left over from the preceding season. The manioc fields were overgrown by the bush, and in a three weeks' circular journey I saw no maize-fields or freshly cleared

ground for planting during the coming wet season except in the exempted districts round Ibanj and Lukenga's town. In a few villages they were cultivating by stealth small patches in the forest where they were supposed to be out cutting the rubber vines; but everywhere else it was the same story, the capitas would not allow them time to clear new ground for cultivation or to permit them to hunt or fish; if they tried to do so their nets and implements were destroyed. The majority of the capitas, when questioned, acknowledged quite frankly that they had orders to that effect. These villages are living on the produce of the old manioc fields, and are buying food from the Bakette. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the population is diminishing. As one woman expressed it: "The men go out hungry into the forest; when they come back they get sick and die." The village of Ibunge, where formerly the largest market of the district was held weekly, now consists of a collection of hovels, eight of which are habitable, and the market is all but dead.

"A tax unlimited in its exactions."

This is what the Directors of the Kasai Company mean by "the law of supply and demand" and "voluntary labour." I will speak of the punishments inflicted for all failures to supply the amounts demanded later on, and will conclude this paragraph of my Report by saying that the Kasai Company have imposed upon these people a tax in rubber unlimited in its exactions, illegal in its operation; since only the Government has the right to impose taxes, none but the authorised State officials have the right to collect them.

3. As regards the use of armed sentries the law is very clear, and runs as follows:—

"L'Article 3 de l'Arrêté du 30 Avril, 1901, qui prévoyait la délivrance de permis de ports d'armes aux capitas, est abrogé, et d'après les dispositions nouvelles le port de fusils à piston ou perfectionnés est interdit aux capitas ou sentinelles chargé d'opérations commerciales avec les indigénes."

I will take the Bakuba country again as an example of the Company's methods of observing the laws of the country, *because it is perhaps the richest in rubber*, and so best typifies the Company's system of exploitation, although the same object-lessons can be observed in varying degrees in other parts of their district.

Armed soldiers to enforce the tax.

Once I had got outside the zone surrounding Ibanj, where the villages are not taxed in rubber, I found the capitas, with very few exceptions, were all armed with cap-guns. I met them frequently escorting the rubber caravans to the Company post, or going from village to village collecting the rubber from the centres under their charge and

distributing the trade goods for the coming month. I noticed that they invariably carried their guns, and in fact I have seldom seen a capita stir outside his own home without his gun. These are the men who are appointed by the Kasai Company agents to enforce the rubber tax. Chosen always from a different race, they have no sympathy with the natives placed under them, and having the authority of the agent behind them they can do as they please, so long as they insure the rubber being brought at the proper times and in sufficient quantities. In the villages they are absolute masters, and the villagers have to supply them gratis with a house, food, palm wine, and a woman. They exercise freely the right of beating or imprisoning the villagers for any imaginary offences or for neglecting their work in any way, and even go as far as imposing fines in cowries on their own account, and confiscating for their own use the cowries paid over by the plaintiff or defendant's family in the case of trial by poison, which, in spite of statements to the contrary recently made in the Belgian Chamber, are of frequent occurrence in this country. The native cannot complain or obtain satisfaction in any way, as the capita acts in the name of the Company, and the Company's agent is always threatening them in the name of "Bula-Matadi." If the authorities wish to act in the matter, they might profitably make enquiry into the doings of the capitas at Bungueh, Bolong, and into those of the Zappo Zap capita, who appears to exercise the chief control over the villages near Ibunge, though he does not live in the latter town. These appear to me to be among the worst where most are bad. The capitas, however, are scarcely to be blamed, as, if they do not extort enough rubber, they are liable in their turn to suffer at the hands of the agent. Witness a case at Sangela, when it was reported that the capita had some time back been chicotted in the village itself by the agent for not bringing in rubber sufficient. Endless cases could be quoted, but these will probably be sufficient to show the methods pursued under the auspices of the Kasai Company. Yet in a letter dated the 8th March, 1908, we find Dr. Dreypondt writing reproachfully :—

Who flog, imprison, and impose fines.

Soldiers only carry out instructions.

"You know we have no armed sentries, but only tradesmen going, with goods of every kind and unarmed, through the villages for the purchasing of rubber. We use only one trading principle—'l'offre et la demande.'"

Traditional hypocrisy. On mentioning this matter of the cap-guns to the Acting Commissaire at Lusambo I was told that the law was not being broken, as, if I had taken the trouble to enquire, I should have found that each capita probably had a personal "permis de port d'armes," and that the gun was his own and not furnished by the Company, which would of course have been illegal. The distinction is ingenious, and a knowledge of the difference would certainly be

consoling to the native rubber-gatherer if only he was aware of it. The "Bulletin Officiel," however, of 1906, p. 183, distinctly says:—

"D'après les nouvelles dispositions, le port des fusils à pistons ou perfectionnés est interdit aux capitas," &c.

Any other reading than that of total prohibition would make this law a farce, as indeed it appears to be at this moment, as nothing would be simpler than for the concessionary Companies to insure each man having a gun and a personal "permis d'armes."

4. Section 3, § 11, of the second book of the Penal Code says:—

"Est puni d'un à cinq ans de servitude pénale celui qui, par violences, ruses, ou menaces, a enlevé ou fait enlever, arrêté ou fait arrêter arbitrairement, détenu ou fait detenir une personne quelconque."

The miseries entailed by the rubber tax.

This law should prevent the Company's agents from punishing the natives by imprisonment for any shortage in the monthly supply of rubber, just as other laws in the second book of the Penal Code should protect them against the punishment of the *chicotte*[1] and fines for the same offence. The laws in this case, however, are completely ignored, and many of the agents not only punish the natives in these ways themselves, but allow their capitas the same privileges. It is only by these means that the natives can be kept at their incessant work. I was not allowed, naturally, to come across any of these prisoners, the news of my coming had inevitably always preceded my arrival, and the district, so far as was possible, had been cleaned up beforehand. The evidence of the natives on the point is, however, incontestable, the more so that they have no idea that the white man is not entirely within his rights in acting as he does. As they not unnaturally regard the Company and "Bula-Matadi" as joint authors of the miseries entailed by the rubber tax, and have no real knowledge of any difference between them, they have no one to whom they dare appeal for redress. It is consequently quite possible for a State official to traverse the district without receiving any complaints of this nature, the more so as the natives are quick enough to see that the State Agent is merely passing through while the Company's agent is always with them. When also an agent has become notorious for his ill-treatment of the natives it is not difficult for him to procure silence by fear. At Ibanj, for instance, only a day's march from a State post, two Bakette from the village of Baka-Tomba were not long ago imprisoned for shortage of rubber, and were daily taken out under the charge of an armed native to work in the fields with ropes round their necks. One of them, tired of captivity, pretended one day that he saw some animal in a tree and obtained leave from the guard to try and get it. He climbed the tree, tied the

Ropes and stocks.

1 Flogging with a hippopotamus-hide whip.

rope which was round his neck to a branch and hung himself. He was cut down, and, after a considerable time, was resuscitated, thanks to the medical experience of one of the missionaries. I was able to question the man myself at his village, and the story was also confirmed by the capita. This same agent, I heard on reliable authority, used to have stocks in his yard in which he fastened the feet of his prisoners; they were, however, removed some days before my arrival.

Invasion of the American Mission Station.

About the same time this same man had the effrontery to take some seven armed natives on to the station of the American mission, during the absence of the missionaries, and demand from the native who was left in charge that he should hand over to him a native, not in his own employ, who had run away in consequence of some dispute, and who he declared was hiding at the mission. The overseer, a Sierra Leone man, very rightly declared his inability to do so, and said he must await the return of the missionaries. An altercation followed, and the agent struck him twice in the face. The man being a British subject I told him if he chose to prosecute I would support him, or else I would insist on the agent paying him an indemnity in cloth. As a prosecution would have entailed his going to Lusambo, a fifteen days' journey, with every prospect of being kept there some four to six months with all the witnesses while awaiting the hearing of his case, he chose the latter method. The cloth was paid.

At the mercy of the European blackguard.

These cases can all be substantiated, and are typical of a certain class of agent which is unfortunately, although not general, far too common. Numerous complaints were also made to me in different villages against an agent, not only that he beat and imprisoned the natives for shortage of rubber, but also that he obliged them to supply him with alcohol distilled from palm wine, and was in the habit of taking any of the village women that struck his fancy at the weekly market held on or near his own post. The Company, I believe, promised the American mission last May that this man should be removed, but when I passed through he was still there. Placed in the power of men like these the natives dare not complain to the authorities, and are entirely helpless. These were, perhaps, the two worst cases which came to my notice. Around Ibanj another system is in force, and when there is any shortage of rubber recourse is had to Lukenga, the Chief, or rather King, of this district, and he is obliged to send his soldiers to deal with the case.

A fine of 10,000 cowries for insufficiency of rubber

These men, who at all events until quite recently were, and possibly still are, dressed as State soldiers and armed with cap guns, are to be met with all over the district on these errands. Six of them arrived at Kosh while I was there, and made no secret of why they had come, and I was present at the palaver between them and the village Headman. The village had sent in their monthly supply of rubber,

but the agent had complained to Lukenga that the balls were too small, and the soldiers were sent to put matters right. The matter was not settled when I left, but a short time previously the village had been fined 10,000 cowries for a similar offence. From the soldiers and from villagers here and elsewhere I learnt that men are constantly being sent to prison at Lukenga's village, where they are kept in chains, for shortage in the rubber supply, and I was also told that the fines, although sent in to Lukenga, were invariably dispatched at once to the Company post.

Thus directly and indirectly the natives are forced by the Kasai Company to supply them with a monthly tax in rubber, and any failure to comply with an illegal demand is met by illegal punishments.

5. In a publication dated 1906 the Company declare that: "Never under any circumstances whatever have the Company undertaken a 'military expedition.' They have not the means of doing so, each factory only possessing five rifles for purposes of defence. Further, they have no motive for doing so, as any show of violence would result in crippling trade for a considerable time."

Military operations by a Government which holds half the Company's shares.

I do not propose to go into the question of how far the State military operations, such as are going on from Eolo, where the natives further inland refused to make rubber, are connected with the desire to increase the Company's output of rubber. So long as the Government holds 50 per cent. of the Kasai Company shares, their actions in these cases, while open to grave suspicion, are nevertheless also open to doubt. On the question of the Company's use of Lukenga's soldiers there is, however, no doubt at all. As I have already reported, these men are largely used by the Company's agents in forcing the natives to make rubber and in punishing them if they do not. Nominally they are sent out by Lukenga, who, according to Kasai Company's agents, is as anxious as is the State to instil into his people "le goût du travail"; he cannot, however, be considered as a free agent, and certainly does not act without instructions. (Lukenka,) Lukenga in consequence of the Bakuba revolt in the early part of the century, was for a considerable time a prisoner at Lusambo. That he was allowed, after being restored to liberty, to establish a small force of soldiers at the capital armed with cap guns may be taken as proof that his relese was not unconditional, and his actions since that time must be looked on *as embodying the terms on which he regained his freedom.* These evidently included the lending of his personal authority, which is very great, and the use of his soldiers to the Kasai Company for the enforcing of the demands of the latter in all that concerns rubber collecting.

How the village of Mueka was treated.

In September or October, 1907, the village of Mueka refused to make rubber. A call was made on Lukenga, who came with a small force to deal with the question, but, meeting with a show of resistance, retired. Later on he came with a larger force, and in connection with armed men from the Company post again attacked the village. The inhabitants fled to the bush, and after their village had been looted they agreed to make rubber. To insure their submission, seven armed men under a corporal belonging to the Company post were quartered on the village for a certain time. This village now makes 9,000 balls of rubber a month. One of the men imprisoned in connection with the business was still in chains at the Capital when I went there. As he was so ill and weak that his fellow prisoners had almost to carry him to the fields to work, Lukenga, at Dr. Shepperd's request, promised to release him.

How the natives are induced to "make rubber."

To quote another instance: A small riverine tribe who lived at the junction of the Sankuru and Kasai Rivers also declined to make rubber. An expedition was arranged. Lukenga went down the Kasai with part of his men in canoes, while the remainder of his soldiers, accompanied, I am informed, by the Company's agent, went by land. They met at the point agreed on, and the natives escaped into the forest. Their villages were looted, their canoes destroyed to prevent them in future wasting their time in fishing, and the Chief, his son, and several prominent men taken to the capital, where they remained for some time in chains. Two men were drowned trying to escape by water, but otherwise no lives appear to have been taken, as they say in both the above cases orders were given not to kill, and, although guns were freely used, the order seems to have been obeyed. This expedition does not appear to have been altogether satisfactory, as I am told even now only a limited amount of rubber comes from this district, and is made mostly by the women.

So long as Lukenga's soldiers can be used in these ways the profits of the Kasai Compnay are not likely to diminish.

Real authors of the system not likely to be brought to trial.

Thus in five different ways the Company is either violating or evading the laws. At Lusambo I was informed that there were sixteen agents of the Company now awaiting trial for various offences; it will be interesting to hear the result. So far as they may concern individual acts of brutality towards the natives, I believe the Substitutes,[1] who will probably hear the cases, will do their duty, but I am convinced that if the accusations brought against these agents touch the system under which the profits are made they will find their hands are tied. Moreover, although the agents can

1 Magistrates.

justly be held responsible for the ways in which they enforce this system, it would be unjust to make them responsible for its existence. The organizers of these methods of exploitation by forced labour, by which alone the Company can make a profit of so many millions yearly, are to be found elsewhere, and are not likely to be brought to trial. Before closing this part of my Report I would like to mention that there are some exceptions to the class of the agent that I have dealt with so far; men whose personal character I believe, from what I saw and from what I heard of them, to be above suspicion. They are, however, rare, and, unfortunately for themselves, servants of the Company.

Bakuba the most interesting race in the Kasai.

I have dealt so far with the ground-work on which the commercial prosperity of the Kasai Company is based, their application of their system varies, however, with the character of the tribes they have to deal with, the degree to which they have been subjugated, and the wealth of their country in rubber-producing vines. The principal races inhabiting the districts I passed through are the Bakuba, the Bakette, and the Lulua, the two former are subject to Lukenga, the last divided into small chieftainships. The Bakuba are the most interesting race in the Kasai: very expert in the native arts of mat-making, cloth weaving and embroidery, carving and ironwork; they are intensely conservative, holding fast to their old customs and superstitions, and slow to accept new things. Ruled for generations by a long line of autocratic Kings whose word is seldom disputed, they have learnt obedience and discipline; while their Tribunals and Village Councils are distinguished by very clearly laid down methods of procedure. Although not wanting in physical courage or strength, they are rather an agricultural than a warlike race, and their villages were formerly noted for their well-built and artistically decorated houses and their well-cultivated fields.

Under the curse of the Kasai Trust.

It is, however, their misfortune to live in a forest country rich in rubber vines, and they have consequently come under the curse of the concessionary Company in the shape of the Kasai Trust. As a result their native industries are dying out, their houses and fields are neglected, and the population is not only decreasing, but also sinking to the dead-level of the less advanced and less capable races.

When protected by American Mission.

For some distance around the mission station of Ibanj,[2] as is also the case at Luebo,[2] the people are not compelled to make rubber, and thus lead a comparatively untroubled existence. In this zone are several Bakuba villages which I visited frequently. The houses were all in good repair and carefully constructed, the bamboo and cane of which the walls are made being interwoven into really good designs, and all the finishing

2 American Mission.

of the door, frames, and roofs showing what labour had been expended on them. The villages were always far above the average in cleanliness, and the men were almost always occupied either in making mats and cloth, carving or house building; the women in dyeing and embroidering cloth, or in household or fieldwork. The laziness of other tribes is not a Bakuba fault.

When not protected.

Having seen these villages it was a real experience to compare them with those outside the pale, where the people are subjected to the rubber tax. Here the villages were dirty, the houses slowly falling into ruin, the holes in the roofs patched by a handful of palm leaves thrust into the thatch; the manioc fields overgrown and neglected; a general appearance of squalor and discomfort everywhere; the whole dominated by the monotonous thudding of mallets beating out rubber.

If there were any looms at work, a question would usually elict the information that Lukenga had sent in for his tribute of cloth, for besides the rubber tax the people have also to pay their tribute to their own King. It is not allowed to interfere however, with the former, and if they cannot find time to spare from their rubber making, they are obliged to buy the cloth elsewhere, usually from the Bakette. When I passed through the village of None the villagers had during the past month been obliged to go out and clear the road by which the King was to pass, and were in consequence behind-hand with their rubber, and had been ordered by the capita to make an additional 2,000 balls as punishment. They had sent men to protest to the agent, but they had not returned when I left. In this way the Bakuba have to submit to a double tax, and they have also to supply food for any of the King's relations and their following if they pass through the village, as well as for such of Lukenga's soldiers as are continually passing backwards and forwards through the country, usually on some question concerning a shortage in the rubber tax. The Bakuba also suffer from various other disadvantages. The implicit obedience which they have been accustomed to give to their King's word renders it additionally easy for the agents to bring pressure to bear now that Lukenga is but an instrument in their hands, and they are continually giving orders to make the balls of rubber bigger. Except among the Chiefs, monogamy is the rule among the Bakuba, and there are thus fewer women to cultivate the fields, especially now that their services are often required in helping to make rubber, either by assisting in bringing in the sticks of cut vine or in the actual making. This explains how the polygamous Bakette can still supply them with the food and native cloth which the Bakuba are often obliged to buy from their neighbours. The fact that the villages are mostly surrounded by forest makes the cultivation harder, as it is a man's work to clear fresh ground; whereas

A double tax and its hardships.

among the Lulua the whole work falls upon the women, as the country is open, and to a large extent covered with grass and small scrub.

Bakuba have now been disarmed.

The Bakuba are also now entirely disarmed, as it has recently been forbidden them to carry bows and arrows. This cuts off their last chance of occasionally adding to their scanty stock of food by shooting some animal going to and from the forest, as all other hunting, either by nets or pitfalls, is prohibited as waste of time. This makes it still easier for the Baluba slaves, who are usually put over them as capitas, to bully and coerce them, and enables the agents to press them to the utmost without fear of revolt. The law against carrying bows and arrows is one of those frequent examples of unequal treatment which the native cannot understand, and therefore resents as unjust. Were the law generally applied it would be an excellent thing, but no objection seems to be made to allowing the quarrelsome and quick-tempered Bakette, who are their neighbours and fellow-subjects, to carry bows and arrows, spears, and knives wherever they go, while the Company are actually themselves arming the Lulua by selling them flint-lock guns and powder in abundance.

Most oppressed race in the Kasai.

There is no doubt that the Bakuba are the most oppressed race to-day in the Kasai. Harassed by their own King in the interest of the Rubber Company, driven by the agents and their capitas, disarmed and deprived even of the most ordinary rights, they will, if nothing is done to help them, sink to the level of the vicious and degraded Bakette.

Pouring enormous wealth in Government Treasury.

One asks oneself in vain what benefits these people have gained from the boasted civilization of the Free State. One looks in vain for any attempt to benefit them or to recompense them in any way for the enormous wealth which they are helping to pour into the Treasury of the State. Their native industries are being destroyed, their freedom has been taken from them, and their numbers are decreasing.

The only efforts made to civilize them have been made by the missionaries, who are hampered at every turn, and continually refused permission to extend their work, a work which is absolutely essential in a country given over to fetishism, and where trial by poison is increasing openly instead of diminishing. I know it was recently stated in the Belgian Chamber that trial by poison had been stamped out by the State; it is not so. It is very largely carried on in secret in many parts of the State. In the Bakuba country it is practised without any attempt at concealment. When I was at Lukenga's village I was shown four women sitting in the law court waiting for the King to send and put his mark on them as a sign of their innocence.

They had just undergone the ordeal, but had vomited the poison and were safe. Only a short time before I learnt another four women had died from it; and again, only a few days previous to that, another seven had died. In two other villages on my road we were told of women who had failed to survive this trial.

The Bakette, who live mostly to the east of Ibanj, are also subject to Lukenga, but are looked down upon by the Bakuba, who do not intermarry with them. They are still more disinclined to accept civilized ways than the Bakuba, but lack their natural good qualities. They are quarrelsome, indolent, dirty, and stricken with disease.

The case of the Bakette.

They are subject to the same rubber tax as the Bakuba, but it presses somewhat less hardly upon them, as, being polygamists, there are more women to attend to the fields and they are not short of food, and, being an excitable and easily roused people, also well armed, the capitas as a rule dare not act toward them with the same severity as with the unharmed and and quieter Bakuba. The difference is recognized by the Company's agents, as the capitas informed me that when there was a shortage in the tax it was usually they who suffered, by having their pay cut or, as was reported in Sangela, by being flogged. The Bakette do not give the same implicit obedience to Lukenga as do the Bakuba, and it is seldom that either Lukenga or the agents dare to arrest a Bakette in his own village for shortage of rubber unless they have taken the precaution to send sufficient armed men to overawe the village. The usual method is to decoy the men who are wanted out of the village and then arrest them. In this case the worse qualities of the Bakette are in some sense a protection against the abuses of the system. They are still, however, fairly submissive, and appear to send in the amount of their tax very regularly, as they have on various occasions also felt the power of the State and are afraid.

The Bakette have not the trading instincts of the Bakuba, and steal on every occasion.

Honest trade only where natives can still defend themselves.

Another tribe I have not mentioned so far are the Bena-Luidi or Bashileli, who inhabit the angle between the Loange and the Kasai Rivers. Unsubdued as yet, they will not allow strangers to enter their country. The Kasai Company some time ago established a post on the west bank of the Kasai in their territory, but had to withdraw it in consequence of difficulties with the natives. The point is interesting, as it gave rise, with one other exception, to the only case of honest fair trade to which, so far as my experience goes, the Company can really lay claim. Finding they could not penetrate into this country as yet, although it is rich in rubber, the

Kasai Company applied to the Basoko, who live to the south on the other side of Portuguese frontier, and are on friendly terms with the Bashileli, to send up men into the Bashileli country and gather the rubber for the Company. The terms of payment were agreed upon, and for some little time these Basoko have been bringing in the rubber to the agent every twenty days. I met some of them who had just been in to the Company post, and talked to them on the subject. The are free to work as they please, to return to their own country when they will, and are not obliged to bring in any fixed amount of rubber. Although there seemed to be some slight dissatisfaction this time about the goods they had just received in payment, they appeared to be thoroughly well satisfied with the arrangement on the whole, This is perfectly legitimate trade, against which nothing can be said. These Basoko are free to work as they will, and their position in an impenetrable country secures them against oppression. I also learnt that the Company have established a capita on the east bank of the Kasai with a supply of goods, with instructions to cross the river and try and establish a regular system of trade with the Bashileli, whose women make a little rubber.

The other exception to the general methods of taxation and forced labour I met with in the zone around Ibanj, within which, as I have already said, the rubber tax is not enforced. Here the Company have induced small colonies of Lulua to come in, and they collect and beat out the rubber which grows in this free zone. As a rule, they work for six months or a year and then return to their homes with their earnings, and their places are taken by others. This also is voluntary labour.

These examples of legitimate trade are, however, exceptions, they concern only a few hundred individuals, and are practised only where the Company cannot penetrate or does not think it advisable to resort to compulsion, and serve merely to throw into higher relief the illegal methods in general use over the rest of the district.

Where the Kasai Company's agents cannot enter and can exert no power they are content to employ fair methods, as the only means by which they can extract any profit from these districts; once, however, they have gained a secure footing there, they introduce taxation, armed capitas, and forced labour.

The Lulua. The country to the south of the Bakuba and Bakette, lying between Luebo and Lusambo, is inhabited by the Lulua. They are physically a smaller race, indolent rather than lazy, without industries of their own, but distinguished by an exceptional hunger for education, and an almost passionate desire to learn to read and write.

The mission at Luebo is constantly being applied to for teachers and books, and find it impossible to train the former and print the latter sufficiently quickly to keep up with the demand. I came across several cases where some man in the village had, in his wanderings, picked up from some mission-taught boy some elements of religion or a smattering of education, and on his return, had established a school to teach what little he himself knew until a qualified teacher could be sent them.

Chiefs taken as hostages to enforce the tax.

In this district the Company applies the same methods of collecting rubber as with the Bakubas, whenever the forest is sufficiently rich in vines, save that they have not Lukenga's soldiers to enforce payment, and have consequently to alter their system slightly. The Chiefs are made to act as secondary capitas, and it appears to be a common thing, especially in the notorious Zappo Lulua district for them to be detained as hostages if there is any shortage. It was a general complaint among the Chiefs that they had to do the work of capitas, but did not get any pay. This, however, is a small matter compared with other prevalent abuses, though even the State, if it makes a Chief responsible for the taxation of his village, is supposed to give him 5 per cent. of the amount.

In this district it is getting more and more difficult to supply the amount of rubber demanded, the large vines they say are mostly cut down, and it is hard to get sufficient of the smaller ones to make regularly the required number of balls. In several villages they complained that they had not been allowed to clear fresh ground for plantation during the coming rainy season.

As soon, however, as one got down south, away from the forest country, these complaints diminished, and ceased altogether on reaching the more open bush country, near Luluabourg, and between that town and Lusambo, where clearing entails very light work, which is done entirely by the women, and where enormous fields of manioc are to be met with everywhere.

Lesser miseries.

In this more open country rubber is scarcer, and there is therefore less oppression. Here the Company's agents employ another system. At the beginning of every month the capita, or the Chief, is given a supply of goods which have to be converted into rubber either by making it or by buying it. From the patches of forest which are found here and there a certain amount can be gathered, but the rest has to be purchased elsewhere, with what produce the village can supply. The riverine Bakambuia, for example, fishers and makers of pots, have two articles which are always in demand among the natives, and can thus usually fulfil their obligations and keep the cloth. Other villages trade

palm oil or manioc, which is less in demand, as most villages grow their own supply, in which case they often have to exchange the trade goods handed to them by the agents for rubber, and then, when the month is over and the rubber handed in, they remain without any profit on their work. If any village cannot get the full amount due, they have to hand back goods equal in value to the shortage, and it depends entirely on the character of the agent they have to deal with whether they are punished or escape merely with threats of future punishment if they fail again. Under this system there is far less punishment or abuse than where it is a question of actually making the rubber. Its fairness, however, even if they escape all punishment, is still open to doubt, as the villages are compelled to do all the work of buyers for the Company without pay, and for the small profit which they may gain if they are able to keep the trade goods and exchange their own produce for its value in rubber. Such villages as have a supply of saleable produce seem fairly content with this system, by which they obtain a supply of cloth. Others, however, who have usually to exchange the cloth itself for rubber, not unnaturally fail to appreciate it. It was difficult at first to understand where the rubber so bought was obtained, as all the villages I had hitherto visited found it difficult enough to make sufficient for their own tax. There are, however, several small sources of supply, which it is not worth while for the Company to deal with individually, and which are dealt with by obliging the villages of the plain to become buyers and middlemen. For instance, the Lulua women on their way to the fieldwork cut any vines they can come across, and beat it out in their spare time. This rubber is recognized by the village as their property, and they can sell it where they will. Many of the men who live and work in the free zone around Luebo make rubber at odd moments, and this comes on the native markets. More comes in from tribes on the Luebo River, who are not yet broken into Company methods, and so forth. On every native market small amounts can be purchased, which eventually come into the Company's hands. So far as the actual makers are concerned, there is no compulsion here, but these amounts are infinitesimal compared with the quantities collected by forced labour, and cannot be considered as controverting the general assertion that the wealth of the Kasai Company is procured by forced labour and illegal methods. By these methods which have been introduced within the last two or three years, the Company has forfeited all claims to consideration, and I see no hope of any amelioration in the state of the district so long as it continues to exist. . . . .

Wealth of Kasai Company produced by forced labour and illegal methods.

WILFRED G. THESIGER.

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A MEMORIAL

ON NATIVE RIGHTS IN THE LAND AND ITS FRUITS IN THE CONGO TERRITORIES ANNEXED BY BELGIUM (SUBJECT TO INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION) IN AUGUST, 1908.

"If it can be shown that the land of the Congo does possess and has always possessed —save where there is no population—Native Owners, and was always recognised as possessing Native Owners until the Edicts of 1891-2; and if it can be shown, concurrently, that wherever the Native Owners of the land had had access (prior to the Edicts of 1891-2) to European markets for the disposal of the produce of the land, either by direct or indirect dealings with Europeans, they traded freely in that produce: then the appropriation by the governing Authorities of the Congo of the land's natural wealth, on the plea that the land possesses no Native Owners, stands out as a violation of Native Law, of Native Rights, of International Law, and of elementary morality without precedent in contemporary history, and the Great Powers, I submit, cannot allow that policy to be perpetuated by the Belgian Government."

PRESENTED TO

H.M. Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs,

By E. D. MOREL,

Hon. Secretary of the

CONGO REFORM ASSOCIATION.

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